

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 045414

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 045414 ACTION BONN PARIS TOKYOLONDON
TEHRAN BUENOS AIRES OTTAWA BRUSSELS IAEA VIENNA 26 FEB
REPEATED NAIROBI 28 FEB

QUOTE

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BUENOS AIRES PASS TO WILCOX, RIO PAS TO CONGEN GOEKERMAN

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: TECH

SUBJECT: RESIGNATIONS IN US NUCLEAR INDUSTRY

1. THE RESIGNATION OF FOUR US NUCLEAR INDUSTRY ENGINEERS
HAS RECEIVED EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY IN NATIONAL AND, PRESUMA-
BLY, INTERNATIONAL PRESS. ONE OF THE FOUR WAS AN NRC
EMPLOYEE AND THE OTHER THREE WERE EMPLOYED BY GENERAL
ELECTRIC.

(A) ROBERT D. POLLARD, AN ELECTRICAL ENGINEER IN THE OFFICE
OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION, SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION TO
NRC ON JANUARY 13. FIRST PUBLICITY APPEARED IN US PRESS
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ON JANUARY 20, AND SUBSEQUENTLY WAS EXTENSIVELY COVERED IN

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL ON FEBRUARY 10. POLLARD ALSO APPEARED ON CBS WIDELY VIEWED "60 MINUTES" PROGRAM.

(B) POLLARD, ACCORDING TO PUBLISHED ARTICLES, IS ACCUSING THE GOVERNMENT OF SUPPRESSING DATA ON PLANT HAZARDS AND ALSO HAS MADE SPECIFIC CHARGES THAT THE INDIAN POINT NUCLEAR UNIT, NEAR NEW YORK CITY, FOR WHICH HE WAS NRC'S PROJECT ENGINEER, QUOTE IS ALMOST AN ACCIDENT WAITING TO HAPPEN. UNQUOTE

2. BOTH NRC CHAIRMAN WILLIAM A. ANDERS (WHO FIRST LEARNED OF POLLARD'S ALLEGATIONS FROM MIKE WALLACE DURING FILMING OF AN INTERVIEW FOR THE AFOREMENTIONED "60 MINUTES" PROGRAM ON JANUARY 13) AND BENARD C. RUSCHE, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION, TALKED AT LENGTH WITH POLLARD AFTER THE SUBMISSION OF HIS RESIGNATION. THE SAFETY ISSUES THAT POLLARD RAISED WITH THE COMMISSION ALREADY HAD BEEN EXAMINED BY OTHER MEMBERS OF NRC'S TECHNICAL STAFF AND ARE CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN RESOLVED DURING THE LICENSING REVIEW. POLLARD, APPARENTLY DISSATISFIED WITH THE RESOLUTION OF THOSE ISSUES, WAS ASKED BY NRC TO DOCUMENT HIS CONCERNS. AS RESULT, POLLARD SUBMITTED A 35-PAGE REPORT TO NRC.

3. THE NRC, AFTER A REVIEW OF POLLARD'S REPORT, ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT: QUOTE IN OUR PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF MR. POLLARD'S REPORT, WE HAVE NOT FOUND ANY NEW INFORMATION NOR ANY INFORMATION WHICH HAD NOT PREVIOUS BEEN DOCUMENTED DURING OUR INDIAN POINT REVIEWS. UNQUOTE

4. THE WASHINGTON STAR NEWS, FEBRUARY 3, PUBLISHED THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES: QUOTE THREE ATOMIC ENGINEERS QUIT TO OPPOSE NUCLEAR ENERGY USE. UNQUOTE ACCORDING TO THIS ARTICLE, THE THREE, ALL MANAGING ENGINEERS, ARE: DALE G. BRIDENBAUGH, GREGORY C. MINOR, AND RICHARD B. HUBBARD. A MORE DETAILED ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES OF THE SAME DATE. MINOR IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID: QUOTE MY REASON FOR LEAVING IS A DEEP CONVICTION THAT NUCLEAR REACTORS AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS NOW PRESENT A SERIOUS DANGER TO THE FUTURE OF ALL LIFE ON THIS PLANET. UNCLASSIFIED

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UNQUOTE. HUBBARD IS QUOTED AS SAYING: QUOTE I AM NOW CONVINCED THAT THERE IS NO WAY YOU CAN CONTINUE TO BUILD PLANTS AND OPERATE THEM WITHOUT HAVING AN ACCIDENT. UNQUOTE

5. BRIDENBAUGH, ACCORDING TO PUBLISHED REPORTS, STATED THAT: QUOTE AS PROJECT MANAGER OF MARK I CONTAINMENT ASSESSMENT I HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY ALARMED AT THE SHALLOWSNESS OF UNDERSTANDING WHICH HAS FORMED THE BASIS

FOR MANY OF THE CURRENT DESIGNS. IT IS PROBABLE

THAT MANY MORE PROBLEMS WILL EMERGE WITH SEVERE CONSEQUENCES IMPACTING EITHER THE SAFETY OR THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THE NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM UNQUOTE.

6. AT LEAST TWO MENTIONED CONCERNS OVER PROPOSED REACTOR SALES TO EGYPT AND ISRAEL AND THE NUCLEAR EXPLOSION BY INDIA. RESIGNATIONS APPEAR TO BE CLOSELY TIED TO, AND PROMOTED BY, GROUPS SUPPORTING "CALIFORNIA INITIATIVE"--A REFERENDUM WHICH SEEKS IN EFFECT TO BAR FURTHER CONSTRUCTION OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS IN THAT STATE.

7. ON FEBRUARY 6, CHAIRMAN ANDERS, COMMISSIONER MASON AND SEVERAL SENIOR NRC STAFF MEMBERS MET WITH BRIDENBAUGH, MINOR AND HUBBARD TO DETERMINE IF THEY HAD SPECIFIC INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE REGULATORY ACTION IN THE DISCHARGE OF NRC'S RESPONSIBILITIES.

8. ALTHOUGH THE MAJOR CONCERN OF THE THREE APPEARED TO BE PHILOSOPHICAL IN NATURE OVER THE LONG-TERM USE OF NUCLEAR POWER, THEY RAISED SEVERAL GENERAL SAFETY ISSUES, ALL OF WHICH ARE UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION BY NRC STAFF, AND SUGGESTED A REVIEW OF THE SAFETY OF PLANTS WHICH ARE PRESENTLY OPERATING. THE GROUP INDICATED, WHEN ASKED SPECIFICALLY BY NRC, THAT THEY HAD NO ADDITIONAL DETAILED FACTS OR DATA THAT IN THEIR VIEW REQUIRED IMMEDIATE ACTION.

9. THE JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY HELD PUBLIC HEARING FEBRUARY 18 AND 19, 23 AND 24 AT WHICH ALL FOUR ENGINEERS WERE GIVEN EXTENSIVE OPPORTUNITY TO AIR THEIR CHARGES OVER THE SAFETY OF NUCLEAR POWER. SUBSEQUENTLY, USG AND NUCLEAR INDUSTRY WITNESSES ARE EXPECTED UNCLASSIFIED

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TO BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO REBUT ALLEGATIONS MADE DURING THE HEARINGS. MORE INFORMATION WILL BE SENT AFTER MEETINGS NOW IN PROGRESS ARE CONCLUDED. KISSINGER UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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